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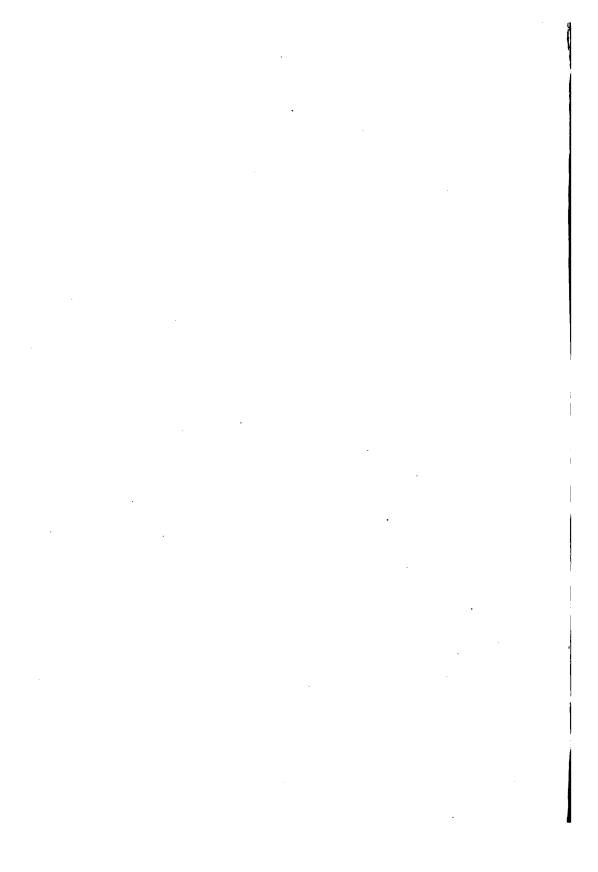
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Minds of Children day

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Nothing to do but work, Nothing to eat but food,

NOT am /12,

JANE JONES AND SOME OTHERS

BEN KING

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN A. WILLIAMS



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FORBES & COMPANY
1909

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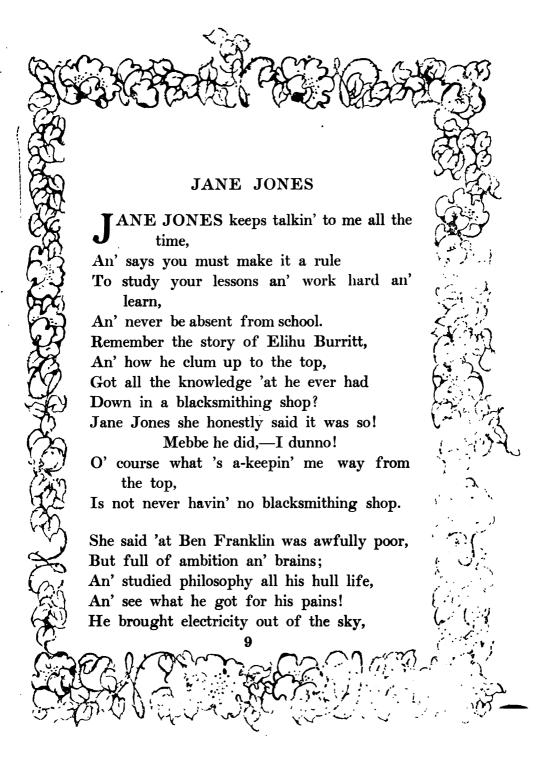
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With a kite an' a bottle an' key,
An' we 're owing him more 'n any one else
For all the bright lights 'at we see.

Jane Jones she honestly said it was so!

Mebbe he did,—I dunno!
O' course what 's allers been hinderin' me
Is not havin' any kite, lightning, er key.

Jane Jones said Abe Lincoln had no books at all

An' used to split rails when a boy;

An' General Grant was a tanner by trade

An' lived way out in Ill'nois.

So when the great war in the South first broke out

He stood on the side o' the right,

An' when Lincoln called him to take charge o' things,

He won nearly every blamed fight.

Jane Jones she honestly said it was so!

Mebbe he did,—I dunno!

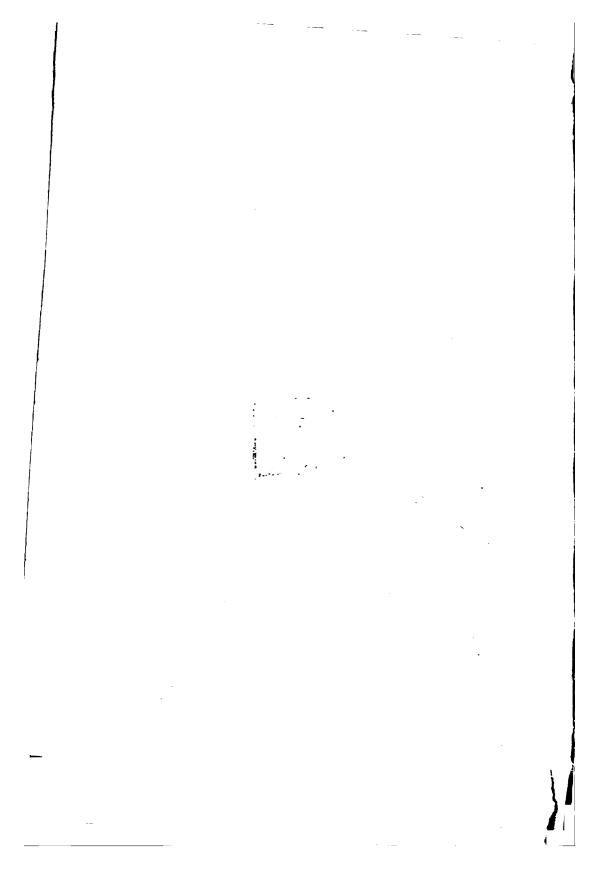
Still I ain't to blame, not by a big sight,

For I ain't never had any battles to fight.



Jane Jones she honestly said it was so!

Mebbe he did,—I dunno!



She said 'at Columbus was out at the knees When he first thought up his big scheme, An' told all the Spaniards an' Italians, too, An' all of 'em said 't was a dream, But Queen Isabella jest listened to him, An' pawned all her jewels o' worth, An' bought him the Santa Maria an' said, "Go hunt up the rest o' the earth!"

Jane Jones she honestly said it was so!

Mebbe he did,—I dunno!

O' course that may be, but then you must allow

They ain't no land to discover jest now!

THE PESSIMIST

Nothing to eat but food,

Nothing to wear but clothes

To keep one from going nude.

Nothing to breathe but air,

Quick as a flash 't is gone;

Nowhere to fall but off,

Nowhere to stand but on.

Nothing to comb but hair,

Nowhere to sleep but in bed,

Nothing to weep but tears,

Nothing to bury but dead.

Nothing to sing but songs,
Ah, well, alas! alack!
Nowhere to go but out,
Nowhere to come but back.

Nothing to see but sights,

Nothing to quench but thirst,

Nothing to have but what we 've got; Thus through life we are cursed.

Nothing to strike but a gait;
Everything moves that goes.
Nothing at all but common sense
Can ever withstand these woes.

IF I SHOULD DIE

I I should die to-night
And you should come to my cold corpse
and say,

Weeping and heartsick o'er my lifeless clay— If I should die to-night

And you should come in deepest grief and woe-

And say: "Here 's that ten dollars that I owe,"
I might arise in my large white cravat,
And say, "What 's that?"

If I should die to-night

And you should come to my cold corpse and kneel.

Clasping my bier to show the grief you feel,
I say, if I should die to-night
And you should come to me, and there and then
Just even hint 'bout payin' me that ten,
I might arise the while,



And you should come in deepest grief and woe—And say: "Here's that ten dollars that I owe,"



PAP'll git a letter, 'nd Uncle Zed a book,

'Nd Aunty Jane expects 'er magazine; 'Nd school 'll all be out,

'Nd the children run 'nd shout,

While a-playin' "one-old-cat" out on the green.

'Nd the men 'at's in the grocery store

'Ll come outside 'nd stand

'Nd talk, 'nd look around-'nd grin;

Fer the folks down at the post-office

A-standin' all around

Are happy when the stage gits in.

Ma has done the bakin', 'nd made some patty cakes,

'Nd Lizzie has done the sweepin' all alone;
'Nd she's dustin' up the furniture

'Nd settin' things about,

'Cause tomorry we're expectin' Aunt Se'phrone. Nan has had 'er hair did up
In papers all night long,
'Nd to-day she 's a-frizzin' it ag'in;
I bet you any money she 's expectin' some
one, too,
'At 'll be here when the stage gits in.

When you see the yaller cat begin a-washin' up,

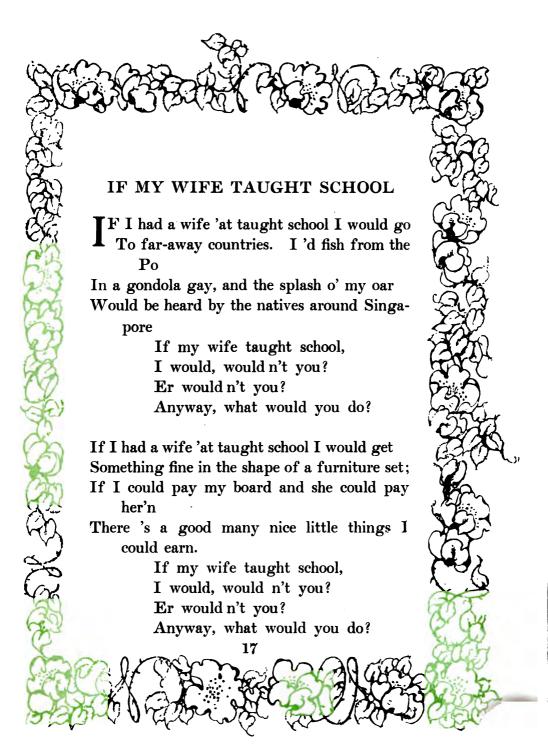
'Nd 'er hind leg pinted over that way, some Folkses allers say it is The surest kind o' sign

'At company is liable to come.

'Nd when the parlor's opened a sort o' funny smell

Comes 'cause the fire's kindled up ag'in; We're goin' to have a high old time 'Nd all our relatives

'Ll be here when the stage gits in.



If my wife taught school you can bet I would fly

Like a condor, I 'd roost pretty middlin' high; I 'd wear a silk tile and own hosses, I vow, And do lots of things I ain't doin' now.

> If my wife taught school, I would, would n't you? Er would n't you? Anyway, what would you do?

If my wife taught school like some women do, And I could n't earn quite enough for us two,

I 'd go in the barnyard, without any fuss,I would blow out my brains with a big biunder-buss.

If my wife taught school,
I would, would n't you?
Er would n't you?
Anyway, what would you do?

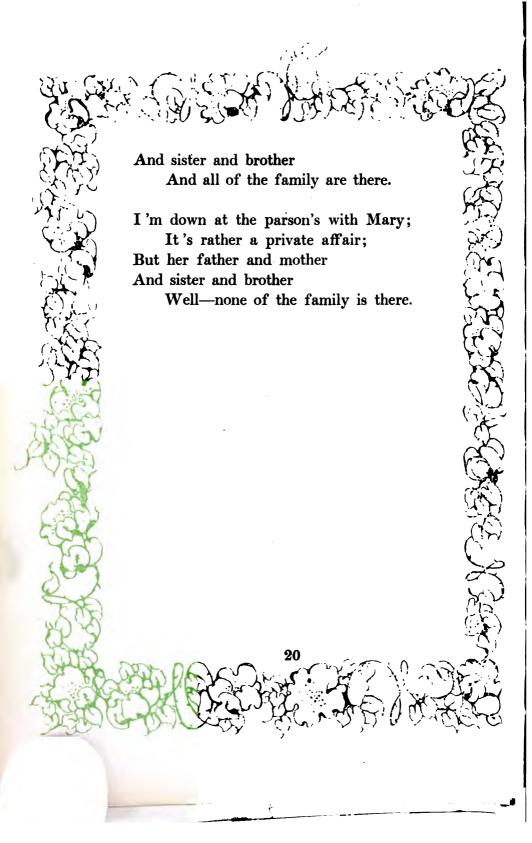
ELOPEMENT

I 'M out at the home of my Mary,
Mary so young and so fair,
But her father and mother
And sister and brother
And all of the family are there.

I'm now on the sofa with Mary,
Mary with bright, golden hair;
But her father and mother
And sister and brother
And all of the family are there.

I 'm way up the river with Mary,
 Picnicking in the cool air;But her father and motherAnd sister and brother
 And all of the family are there.

I 'm in the surf bathing with Mary;Her form is beyond compare;But her father and mother





I 'm down at the parson's with Mary; It 's rather a private affair;

<u>:</u>

LIKE THE NEW FRIENDS BEST

DON'T talk to me of old time friends,
But jest give me the new.

The old friends may be good enough,
But somehow they won't do,
I don't care for their old time ways;
Their questions you'll allow
Are soulless as a parrot's gab:—
"Well, what you up to now?"
That's one thing I've agin 'em,
'Cause that with all the rest,
Like hintin' 'bout some old time debt;
I like my new friends best.

I meet an old friend in the street,
As oftentimes I do,
Mechanically he stops to shake
An' say: "Well, how are you?"
Then drawin' down his face, as if
His cheeks was filled with lead,
He says: "I spose you've heard the news?"
"No!" "Eli Stubbs is dead.

An' 'fore he died he ast for you—
Seemed sorry you was gone,
An' said 'at what he 'd let you have
He hoped would help you on."
Now that 's why I don't like 'em much,
You prob'bly might have guessed.
I ain't got much agin 'em, but
I like the new friends best.

Old friends are most too home-like now They know your age, an' when You got expelled from school, an' lots Of other things, an' then They 'member when you shivereed The town an' broke the lights Out of the school 'nen run away An' played "Hunt Cole" out nights. They 'member when you played around Your dear old mommy's knee; It's them can tell the very date That you got on a spree. I don't like to forget 'em, vet If put right to the test Of hankerin' right now for 'em, I like the new friends best.

HER FOLKS AN' HIZ'N

HE maird her 'cause she had money an'

Property left from her husband's income; But both of the families was awfully stirred, An' said the worst things 'at the town ever heard.

> An' her folks an' hiz'n, Er hiz'n an' her'n, Never spoke to each other, From what I can learn.

His folks begun it an' jest said 'at she Was the worst actin' thing they ever did see; An' ought to be ashamed fer bein' so bold, 'Cause her husband he had n't had time to get cold.

An' her folks an' hiz'n, Er hiz'n an' her'n, Never spoke to each other, From what I can learn. Her folks they all set up 'at he was no good, An' if 'twas n't fer her-well, he 'd have to saw wood.

Then all of her kin, every blasted relation, Said she 'd lowered herself in their estimation,

> So her folks an' hiz'n, Er hiz'n an' her'n, Never spoke to each other, From what I can learn.

The sisters they told—this is 'tween you an' I—

'At they thought she wanted her husband to die:

An' they whispered around—but don't you lisp a word—

The awfulest things that a soul ever heard.

So her folks an' hiz'n, Er hiz'n an' her'n, Never spoke to each other, From what I can learn.



The sisters they told—this is 'tween you an' I—'At they thought she wanted her husband to die:

• • • . • ,

They said that a travelin' man er a drummer, Who stopped at the hotel a long time last summer,

That he—no it was n't that now—let me see— That she—er something like that, seems to me.

> Well, her folks an' hiz'n, Er hiz'n an' her'n, Never spoke to each other, From what I can learn.

I hear 'at the families keep up the old fight,
A-roastin' each other from mornin' till night;
But the young maird couple they 've moved to the city,

Where gossip don't go; but I think it a pity
That her folks an' hiz'n,
An' hiz'n an' her'n,
Never speak to each other,
From what I can learn.

THAT VALENTINE

NCE, I remember, years ago,
I sent a tender valentine;
I know it caused a deal of woe.
Once, I remember, years ago,
Her father's boots were large, you know.
I do regret the hasty line,
Once, I remember, years ago,
I sent a tender valentine.

I know I never shall forget
I sent a tender valentine.
Somehow or other I regret,
But how I never can forget,
But then, I know, I know I met
Her father. Oh, what grief was mine.
I know I never shall forget
I sent a tender valentine.

'RASTUS KING

A S you happen jest to mention
Old time friends 'at sort o' bring
Mem'ries back, I'd like to ask
What's become o' 'Rastus King?

Did he go out west prospectin'
Far on Californy's rim?
Did he settle with the Injuns,
Or did the Injuns settle him?

What a great big-hearted feller 'Rastus was, an' how he'd sing! Sometimes tears 'll start to rollin' When I think o' 'Rastus King.

Where is he an' what's come o' him?

Is he toilin' hard fer bread?

Is he prosperous an' wealthy?

Is he livin' still, or dead?

How my heart recalls the mornin'
That I met him. Splittin' wood,
Payin' fer his school tuition,
Earnin' thus a livelihood.

Allers boarded at the neighbors, Turned his hand at anything; Faithful, honest; well, the farmers Simply swore by 'Rastus King.

Find him down to meetin' Sundays
Sittin' in the deacon's pew;
Talk about yer knowledge; he had
Read the Bible through an' through.

When the choir would jine together
An' with the congregation sing,
Way above all other voices
You could hear him—'Rastus King.

Did you ever come to meet him?

Do you think he's livin' here?

Say, he ain't much older 'n I am;

Reckon now he's sixty year.

Last I heerd he 's doin' splendid,Rich, fast horses, everything.Jest like him, a regular schemer;Oh! I knew him, 'Rastus King.

Then the hackman I'd been asking
All these questions thus did say:
"'Rastus livin' purty quiet;
Don't go out at all, they say."

"Don't go out at all—why, stranger?
What's the matter? Did he fail?"
"Well," said he, "nothin's the matter,
Stephen, only he's in jail."

MARY HAD A CACTUS PLANT

MARY had a cactus plant, So modestly it grew, Shooting its little fibers out It lived upon the dew.

Her little brother often heard Her say it lived on air, And so he pulled it up one day And placed it in a chair.

Placed it in a chair he did,

Then laughed with ghoulish glee—

Placed it in the old arm-chair

Under the trysting tree.

Nor thought of Mary's lover,
Who called each night to woo,
Or even dreamed they'd take a stroll,
As lovers often do.

The eve drew on. The lover came,
They sought the trysting tree.
Where has the little cactus gone?
The lover—where is he?



Placed it in a chair he did, Then laughed with ghoulish glee—

SAY WHEN, AND SAY IT

RITE me a poem that has n't been writ, Sing me a song that has n't been sung yet,

String out a strain that has n't been strung, And ring me a chime that has n't been rung yet.

Paint me a picture but leave out the paint,
Pile up a pile of old scenes of my schoolery,
Leave me alone; I would fain meditate
And mourn o'er the moments I lost in tomfoolery.

Tell me a tale that dropped out of a star,

Push me a pun that is pungent, not earthy.

I must have something sharp, strident, and

strong

To eke out a laugh or be moderately mirthy.

Give me a love that has never been loved, Not knowing the glance of the bold and unwary, A cherub abreast with the saints up above, And I'll get along and be passably merry.

But come on the fly to me, come on the jump, Don't hang around on the outskirts and walk to me;

Throw out your chest well, and hold up your head;

Say when, and say it, or else don't you talk to me.

DREAMY DAYS

OH! the dreamy days of youth,
In appearance how uncouth,
As we waded through the frog ponds and
The ditches.

With big patches on each knee,
And where they had n't ought to be.
Oh! the days when one suspender
Held our breeches.

Oh! the dreamy days of yore,
And the slippery cellar door.
Oh! that cherry tree whose fruit we oft
Were testing.

Then we'd wait till after tea,
When we'd sing with doleful glee.
Oh! how often mother made it
Interesting.

IF I CAN BE BY HER

I D-D-DON'T c-c-c-are how the r-r-r-obin sings,

Er how the r-r-r-ooster f-f-flaps his wings, Er whether 't sh-sh-shines, er whether 't pours, Er how high up the eagle s-s-soars, If I can b-b-be by her.

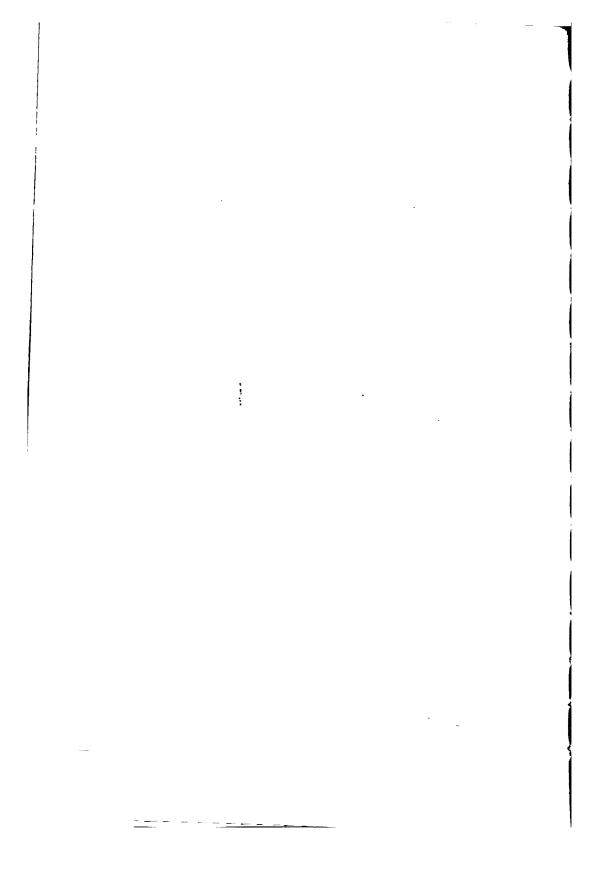
I don't care if the p-p-p-people s-say
'At I 'm weak-minded every-w-way,
An' n-n-never had no cuh-common sense,
I 'd c-c-c-climb the highest p-picket fence
If I could b-b-b-be by her.

If I can be by h-h-her, I 'll s-s-swim
The r-r-rest of life thro' th-th-thick an' thin;
I 'll throw my overcoat away,
An' s-s-s-stand out on the c-c-c-oldest day,
If I can b-b-b-be by her.

You s-s-see, sh-sh-she weighs an awful pile, B-b-b-but I d-d-d-don't care—sh-she 's just my style,



An' s-s-s-stand out on the c-c-c-coldest day, If I can b-b-b-be by her.



An' any f-f-fool could p-p-p-lainly see She 'd look well b-b-b-by the side of me, If I could b-b-b-be by her.

I b-b-b-braced right up, an' had the s-s-s-and To ask her f-f-father f-f-fer her hand; He said: "Wh-wh-what p-p-prospects have you got?"

I said: "I gu-gu-guess I 've got a lot, If I can b-b-be by her."

It's all arranged f-f-fer Christmas Day,
Fer then we're goin' to r-r-r-run away,
An' then s-s-some th-th-thing that cu-cu-could
n't be

At all b-b-before will then, you s-s-see, B-b-b-because I'll b-b-b-be by her.

THE HAIR-TONIC BOTTLE

HOW dear to my heart is the old village drug store,

When tired and thirsty it comes to my view.

The wide-spreading sign that asks you to "Try it,"

Vim, Vaseline, Vermifuge, Hop Bitters, too.

The old rusty stove and the cuspidor by it,

That little back room. Oh! you've been
there yourself,

And ofttimes have gone for the doctor's prescription,

But tackled the bottle that stood on the shelf.

The friendly old bottle, The plain-labeled bottle,

The "Hair-Tonic" bottle that stood on the shelf.

How oft have I seized it with hands that were glowing,

And guzzled awhile ere I set off for home; I owned the whole earth all that night, but next morning

My head felt as big as the Capitol's dome.

And then how I hurried away to relieve it, The druggist would smile o'er his poisonous pelf,

And laugh as he poured out his unlicensed bitters,

And filled up the bottle that stood on the shelf.

The unlicensed bottle,
The plain-labeled bottle,

That "Hair-Tonic" bottle that stood on the shelf.

THE YALLER JACKETS' NEST

IF I could only wander back
To boyhood jest one day,
So'st' I could have my chice agin
Of games we used to play,
I'd let the kites an' marbles go,
An' say, "Come on, boys! let's
All go out a-huntin' fer
The yaller jackets' nest."

Jest to lay up in the shadder
Of the fence once agin
Of the old vacant lot
'At the cows pastured in,
Where the dandelions were bloomin,'
An' there take a rest,
While you listen to the music
Round the yaller jackets' nest.

There was one 'at allers went along An' romped with us an' raced, With her sunbonnet a-hangin' back An' curls down to 'er waist, In the checkered little frock she wore Of gingham,—what a pest She was to us when huntin' fer The yaller jackets' nest.

It's the prime of the blossoms
'At's a-hangin' from the trees
An' the music of the buzzin'
'At brings lonesome memories,
Fer it seems as if I heerd 'er say
"You better look out, lest
They all swarm out an' sting you
From the yaller jackets' nest."

Sometimes I think I hear 'er voice
An' see 'er eyes of blue,
That borried all their color from
The sky 'at peeks at you
Between the clouds in summer
After rain has fell an' blessed
The flowers an' openin' blossoms
Round the yaller jackets' nest.

SYCAMORE

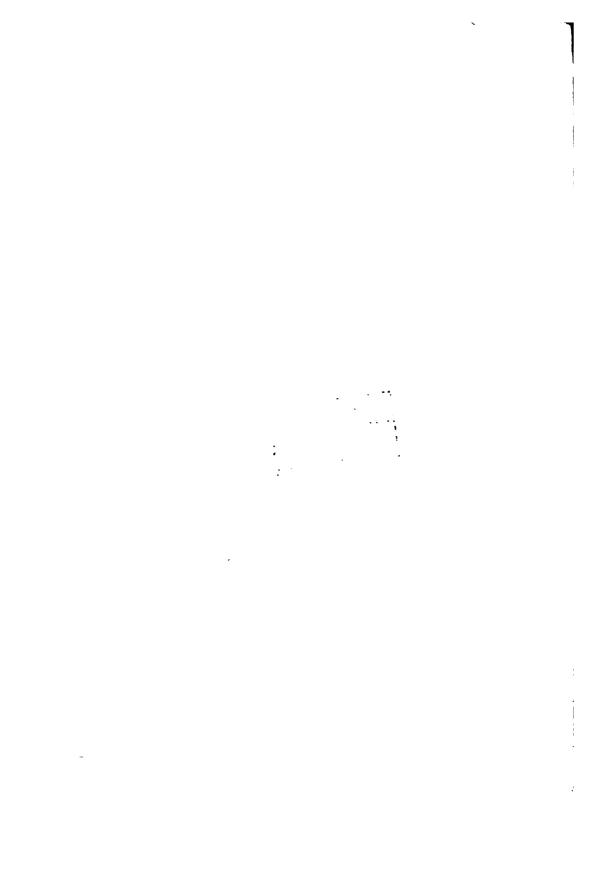
PECOOLIARITY of his bark,
An' yit not only that,
We found him every mornin' on
The front piazza mat.
So Cenath got ter likin' him,
An' one day says ter me,
"I'm goin' ter call him Sycamore,
He sticks so cluss," says she.

She used ter sic him on the tramps
That come aroun' the place,
An' book agents an' other scamps,
He 'd give 'em all a chase—
He scooted over fences, an'
Aroun' the farm he 'd run,
An' then come back an' wag his tail
As if he'd been havin' fun.

I never had ter sic him onTer any livin' thing,I 've seed that dog take arter birds,Yes, birds 'at 's on the wing,



An' book agents an' other scamps, He 'd give 'em all a chase—



An' chase 'em 'bout a mild er so,
Ter see 'f they would n't light;
Then he 'd sit down an' watch 'em till
They flew clean out o' sight.

The dangdest dog he was ter hunt,
An' had the keenes' scent;
One day he smelled an animile,
An' after him he went.
Towards dark he come a-laggin' back,
An' any one could tell
That Sycamore had captured him,
We knew it mighty well.

He pulled out every rooster's tail

I had aroun' the coop,

An' kept our yaller Thomas cat

Hid underneath the stoop.

An' when a vehicle druv by

He'd skoot out thro' the door

An' sic 'em down the dusty road

A half a mild er more.

He 'd lay behin' the hottest stove An' bark out in his sleep, He had fun with a peddler onct,
An' chased him round the well.

I wish as you'd a jest been there
An' heerd that feller yell:

"Git out! Git out! Call off yer dog!"
He thought his jig was up.

Says I: "Don't be afraid o' him,
He 's nothin' more 'n a pup."

He used ter sic the thunder, too,
An' 't used ter give us pain
Ter see him set out in a storm
An' bark up at the rain.
He 'd shift his head t' one side
When he 'd hear the thunder roar,
An' then bark all the harder 'f I'd say:
"Sic 'em, Sycamore!"

He sict all of my neighbor's sheep, An' did a pile o' harm;

He took my horses an' my colts An' raced 'em round the farm.

I jest can see him runnin' yit, His tail a-flyin' high,

But why it is we 're mournin' now Is how he come ter die.

I sold him ter a farmer 'cause He got so cross an' mean,

When one day long in harves' time He jumpt a thrash machine.

They said he give one little yelp—An' then went up the spout.

Poor Sycamore got harvested,

That 's what we 're sad about.

We mourn ter think our dear old friend At last got "squeezed in wheat."

They found his collar—tail—some hair—

The rest was sausage meat.

His gentle bark had sailed away Far ter some canine shore.

My wife shed tears an' said, "Poor dog, He never 'll sic 'em more."

a fight way of frame

KEEP HIM A BABY

KEEP him a baby as long as you can;
Bless him, the dear little, cute, cunning
man!

Keep him in dresses, and apron, and bib; Rock him to sleep in his own little crib.

Keep him a baby enjoying his toys—Soon enough he will be one of the boys; Keep him a baby and keep him at home—Manhood will very soon cause him to roam.

Ofttimes at night when he wakes for a frolic, Don't get excited—it's only the colic; When he has reason your slumbers to mar, Get up and walk with him, just as you are.

First it is Winslow and then it is squills, Then you will find one or two doctor's bills, Though he's a trouble at times, it is true, When he grows up he will take care of you. Keep him a baby still taking his nap, Don't you chastise him for any mishap; When he falls off a sofa or chair, Don't stop his crying by calling a bear.

Keep him a baby and do as I say;
Take him to ride in his carriage each day;
Show him the bossie, the horse and the bowwow;

Soon you will hear him say "moo!" to the cow.

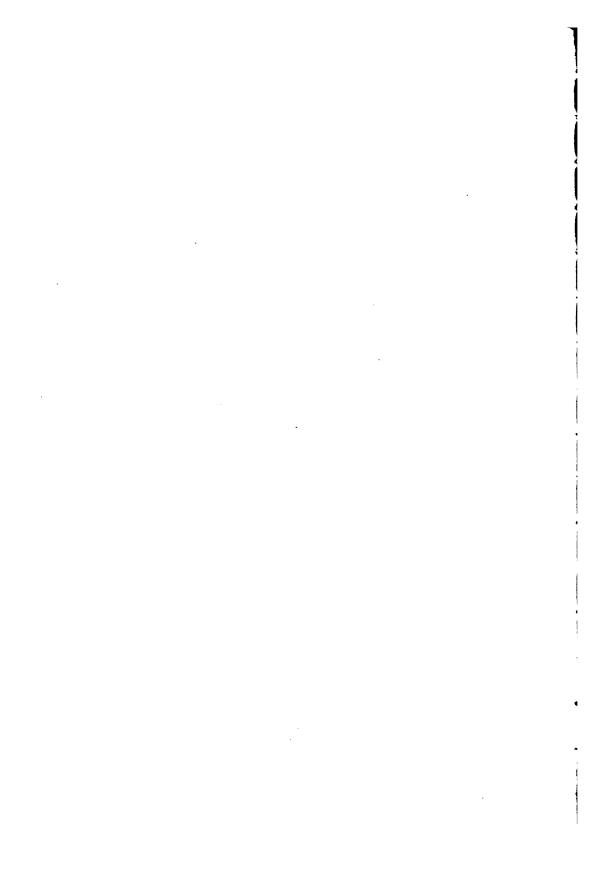
Keep him a baby: he'll soon be a boy, Then he'll forsake every plaything and toy; Keep him a baby—he'll soon be a man, Keep him a baby as long as you can.

A SUMMER'S AFTERNOON

WAS the close of a summer's day, The sound of the flail had died away, The sun was shedding a lingering gleam, And the teakettle sung with its load of steam. The old clock ticked that hung on the wall And struck with the same old cuckoo call; Then oft I could hear the mournful bay Of some watch-dog far away. Then all to onct piped in a jay. I just sot there with my senses gone, And the shadders of twilight a-creepin' on, With the eerie hum of the small pewees, Over there in the cedar trees. And the tinkle of bells in the marshy loam That told me the cows were coming home, And the sighing breeze came o'er the croft, But ah! comes a melody far more soft Than the troubled notes of a lydian lute Or the echoing strains of a fairy's flute; It bids me awaken and live and rejoice, 'T is only the sound of Elviry's voice—



'T was the close of a summer's day, The sound of the flail had died away,



Like an angel's whisper it comes to me:—
"Wake up, you fool, and come to tea."
And it ain't in the spring or it ain't in the fall,
But the close of a summer's day,
That's all.

THE BUNG TOWN CANAL

Do you remember, Tom, Billy, an' Sal, The old swimmin' days in the Bung Town Canal?

The big millin' logs fast asleep on its banks, We used to jump off of an' cut up odd pranks In our tropical costume. We used to make Sal

Go home when we swum in the Bung Town Canal.

I never'll fergit it, an' 'tween you an' me, You 'member the place where the mill used to be?

We had a long spring-board out there 'n we 'd scud

An' jest go head foremost clean into the mud.

I may fergit some things, but I never shall Fergit them old times round the Bung Town Canal. Nobody need never say nothin' to me 'Bout the Blue Danube River er banks of the Dee,

They can't perduce sights like some 'at I 've seen

Crawlin' up on its banks an' off in the green Old marsh where the scum an' malarier are, 'S the pizenest things in the world out in there.

Me an' John Price caught the gol blamedest thing,

With six legs an' four fins an' a yaller-jack sting,

Two eyes in its head an' two horns in its tail, An' it carried a shell on its back like a snail, So we tuck it home an' skeer'd mother an' Sal

'Ith what we fished out of the Bung Town Canal.

Once they's a stranger 'at jest took a drink From the Bung Town Canal, an' course he didn't think

What he was doin', an' after awhile

He went an' turned yeller, as yeller as bile; So doctors all went to perscribin' fer him, Makin' his chances a blamed sight more slim.

What they all said was that he had a snake Way down in his stummick an' he better take One er two whiskeys 'fore eatin' each meal, Then in a week er two mebbe he'd feel Better. So natcherly he tuck to drink, Usin' rye whiskey 'bout three months, I think.

Course havin' snakes in the stummick is tough, But snakes is a-knowin' when they've got enough.

So gittin' dissatisfied, most of 'em fled, Some hid in his boots an' some got in his bed. I argied the pint 'at he never'd a died If they'd a jest let 'em be on the inside.

We buried him there where the low grasses creep,

In a bed of pond-lilies we put him to sleep, Where the meddy-larks sing an' the cry of the loon, An' the rice-hen is singin' a dolefuller tune. We left him alone, after writin' his gal Concernin' his death an' the Bung Town Canal.

Oh, them barefooted days an' the spot where I'd lay

An' jest steep my hide in the glory o' day, A-hearin' the bulrushes whisper an' sigh, An' watchin' the shadder-clouds hurryin' by.

How I long to go back there, with some oldtime pal,

An' dive off once again in the Bung Town Canal.

LOVEY-LOVES

H, love! let us love with a love that loves,
Loving on with a love forever;
For a love that loves not the love it should
love—

I wot such a love will sever.

But, when two loves love this lovable love, Love loves with a love that is best;

And this love-loving, lovable, love-lasting love Loves on in pure love's loveliness.

Oh, chide not the love when its lovey-love loves With lovable, loving caresses;

For one feels that the lovingest love love can love,

Loves on in love's own lovelinesses.

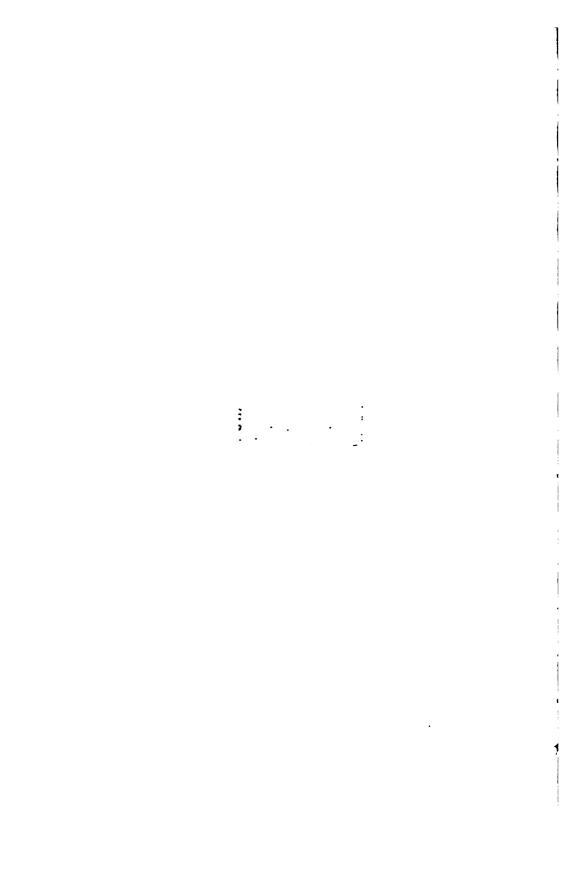
And love, when it does love, in secret should love—

'T is there where love most is admired;
But the two lovey-loves that don't care where
they love

Make the public most mightily tired.



Oh, chide not the love when its lovey-love loves With lovable, loving caresses;



BENTON HARBOR, MICH.

SOMETIMES I ain't a thing to do, an' so jest fer the nonce,

I think of things I didn't see out on Midway Plaisance.

Although they claimed 'at every tribe an' nation, seems to me,

Was represented, yit there's some I simply didn't see.

I went all through the Cairo Street, an' saw the Luxor great,

I saw the South Sea Islanders, an' them from Congo State,

I saw the Patagonians, but, durn it all, my wish

Was more to see them funny folks from Benton Harbor, Mich.

I took in all the buildin's that was prom'nent on the grounds,

Got in with a C'lumbian guard an' we jest went the rounds.

I says to him, "I'm here this week to take the hull thing in;

I might not git a chance to go against the thing agin.

Outside o' horterculture an' some o' the smaller fruits

I want to see them Wolverines at's still a-wearin' boots.

So don' show me no minin' er animals er fish, I'd rather see them curios from

Benton Harbor, Mich."

What d' I care fer foreign folks 'at come from pagan lands?

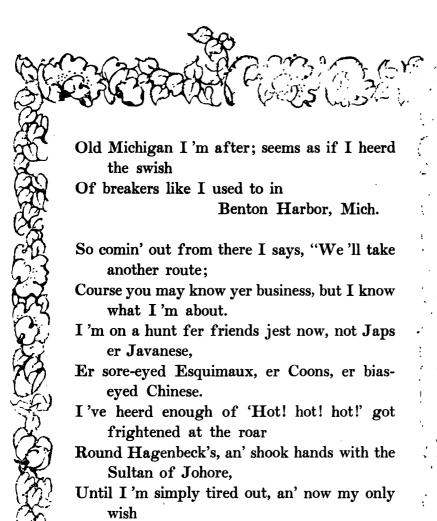
I 've heerd an' read enough of Paig, an' heerd the tom-tom bands.

I 've seen enough of Egypt, an' Algiers, an' ancient Rome,

An' now I 'm jest a-spilin' fer somepin' right 'round home.

Why, gosh all Friday! Take yer Turks an' all yer foreign kit,

I want to see them Wolverines, an' I ain't seen 'em yit;



Benton Harbor, Mich."

Is jest to see them old-time folks from

When lookin' up I saw a tower—'t was Michigan, by gosh!

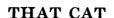
"Come on," I says, "I'll show you now some folks you never saw,

Human bein's from Muskegon, Dowagiac, an'

Saginaw;
Them folks 'at raises celery way out in Kal'mazoo,

Cassopolis, an' Globeville, an' Ypsilanti, too— St. Joe an' Berrien Centre." I guess I got

my wish,
I jined the jays an' we went back to
Benton Harbor, Mich.



THE cat that comes to my window sill
When the moon looks cold and the night
is still—

He comes in a frenzied state alone
With a tail that stands like a pine tree cone,
And says: "I have finished my evening lark,
And I think I can hear a hound dog bark.
My whiskers are froze and stuck to my chin.
I do wish you 'd get up and let me in."
That cat gits in.

But if in the solitude of the night

He does n't appear to be feeling right,
And rises and stretches and seeks the floor,
And some remote corner he would explore,
And does n't feel satisfied just because

There 's no good spot for to sharpen his claws,

And meows and canters uneasy about, Beyond the least shadow of any doubt That cat gits out.

'CAUSE IT'S GITTIN' SPRING

THE medder lark is pipin' forth a sweeter note to me,

An' I hear the pewees over yonder in the cedar tree;

The popple leaves is quiv'rin' 'cause the wind is in the west,

An' the robin's round a-hookin' straws to build hisself a nest;

The blackbird he's a-flashin' up the crimson on his wing.

What's the reason?
Oh, the reason's 'cause it's gittin' spring.

The old man's got the rheumatiz an' stiff as he can be;

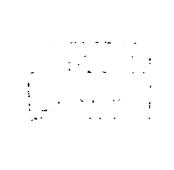
Why it don't git settled weather 's moah 'n he can see?

But when it clears off splendid, then he's feared the crops is lost,

An' he reckons jest a little wind 'ud keep away the frost.



The popple leaves is quiv'rin' 'cause the wind is in the west, An'the robin's round a-hookin'straws to build hisself a nest;



The kitchen door is open; I can hear Elmiry sing.

What's the reason?
Oh, the reason's 'cause it's gittin' spring.

The air is kind of soft'nin' an' you think it's goin' to storm;

Sometimes it's kind of chilly, then again it comes off warm;

An' jest when it's the stillest you can hear the bullfrog's note,

An' it 'pears as if he wondered how the frost got in his throat.

The ducks an' geese are riotous, an' strainin' hard to sing.

What's the reason?
Oh, the reason's 'cause it's gittin' spring.

THE ULTIMATUM

With a thousand gilded signs,

And have upholstered furniture

In quaint antique designs;

Have the latest patent telephone

Where you can yell 'Hello!'

But," said she, "I just made up my mind

That typewriter must go.

"You can stay down at the office,
As you have done, after hours;
And if you are partial to bouquets,
I 'll furnish you with flowers.
You can spring the old club story
When you come home late, you know,
But, remember, I 've made up my mind
That typewriter must go.

"You can let your bookkeepers lay off
And see a game of ball;
The office boy can leave at noon
Or not show up at all.

There—what is this upon your coat?

It is n't mine I know.
I think I know a thing or two—
That typewriter shall go."

SHE DOES NOT HEAR

SH-SH-SH-SHE does not hear the r-r-r-robin sing

Nor f-f-f-feel the b-b-b-balmy b-b-breath of spring;

Sh-sh-she does not hear the p-p-pelting rain

B-b-beat ta-ta-tat-t-t-toos on the w-w-winder p-p-pane.

Sh-sh-she cuc-cuc-cannot see the autumn s-s-sky,

Nor hear the wild geese s-s-stringing b-b-by; And, oh! how happy t-t-t-'t is to know Sh-sh-she never f-f-feels an earthly woe!

I s-s-spoke to her; sh-sh-she would not speak.

I kuk-kuk-kissed her, but c-c-cold was her

I kuk-kuk-kissed her, but c-c-cold was her cheek.

I could not twine her w-w-wondrous hair— It w-w-was so wonderf-f-fully rare.

B-b-beside her s-s-stands a v-v-v-vase of flowers,

A gilded cuc-cuc-clock that t-t-tells the hours;

And even now the f-f-fire-light f-f-falls On her, and d-d-dances on the walls.

Sh-sh-she's living in a p-p-pup-purer life, Where there's no tu-tuh-turmoil and no strife;

No t-t-t-tongue can m-m-m-mock, no words embarrass

Her b-b-b-by g-g-gosh! she's p-p-plaster paris!

THE DAY AND THE SHINGLE

THE day is done and the spanker, So oft in the hands of mother, Is soon to be wafted downward On little red-headed brother.

I can hear the fall of the shingle
And poor little brother's refrain,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That seems to resemble a pain.

A feeling of sadness and sorrow

That must be akin to pain,

It resembles a seated sorrow

That boyhood can only explain.

So I hie me away to the attic

And put on a few pair of pants,

And wedge in a big paper bustle

Belonging to one of my aunts.

I can see the lights of the village, And also the deep muddy pool,



I take a recumbent position,

The shingle then comes into play,

· . Where often I ducked little brother After the close of school.

But she calls me down from the attic

And asks me to take off my clothes,
With her able-bodied assistance
I get myself ready to pose.

I take a recumbent position,

The shingle then comes into play,

Johnnie sits down in a corner

And watches the sad matinée.

As she presses her thin lips together
I feel that at every rebound
She puts on a vermilion finish
Where my back forms sort of a mound.

Such things have power to quiet

The restless pulse of care,

But it makes it rather uneasy

To sit on a hard-bottom chair.

Come read to me some poem, Some "Favorite Prescription" lay, That will soothe this restless feeling And take the stinger away.

And the kitchen shall cease its sobbing,
And the cares that infest the day
Will quietly fold their breeches
And silently steal away.

THE RIVER ST. JOE

WHERE the bumblebee sips and the clover is red,

And the zephyrs come laden with peachblow perfume,

Where the thistle-down pauses in search of the rose

And the myrtle and woodbine and wild ivy grows;

Where the catbird pipes up and it sounds most divine

Off there in the branches of some lonely pine;
Oh, give me the spot that I once used to
know

By the side of the placid old River St. Joe!

How oft on its banks I have sunk in a dream, Where the willows bent over me kissing the stream,

My boat with its nose sort of resting on shore,

While the cat-tails stood guarding a runaway oar;

It appeared like to me, that they sort of had some

Way of knowing that I would soon get overcome,

With the meadow lark singing just over the spot

I didn't care whether I floated or not—
Just resting out there for an hour or so
On the banks of the tranquil old River St.
Joe.

Where the tall grasses nod at the close of the day,

And the sycamore's shadow is slanting away— Where the whip-poor-will chants from a far distant limb

Just as if the whole business was all made for him.

Oh! it's now that my thoughts, flying back on the wings

Of the rail and the die-away song that he sings,

Bring the tears to my eyes that drip off into rhyme,

And I live once again in the old summer time;

For my soul it seems caught in old time's under-tow

And I'm floating away down the River St. Joe.

BABY UP AT BATTENBERG'S

HEERD 'bout what's happened? Why o' course ye has;
Baby up at Battenberg's,
Hope it ain't the las'!

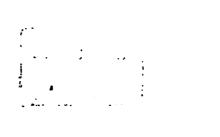
Doctor come at eight o'clock, Rig all spleshed with clay; Dad a-trampin' up the hall, Skeery?—I sh'd say!

Kind o' still roun' the house, Folks on tiptoe walk Till the door is open An' we hear a squawk!

Doctor whispers suthin'—
Daddy hollers: "No!"
Doctor says, "Twelve pounder!"
Daddy whoops out: "Sho!"



Doctor whispers suthin'- - Daddy hollers: "No!"



Daddy—happier 'n a clam! Mother doin' well; Baby up at Battenberg's, Have n't ye heerd tell?

THE CAT O' NINE TAILS

THE old cat o' nine tails is comin' round agin,

An' the way he worries children sometimes is a sin;

He grabs 'em by the collar, an' he yanks 'em by the clothes

An' reaches for a tender place. Why, what do you suppose

Will happen if you're impident an' set aroun' an' grin?

Well, I'll have to call the cat o' nine tails in—

Have to call him in; yes, have to call him in; in.

tails

cat o' nine

old

I'll have to call the old cat o' nine tails in.

cat o' nine

tails

in.

Are you sassy to yer father, are you fibbin' to yer mother?

Are you quarrelin' with yer sister an' a-pinchin' of yer brother,

Do you "ring around the rosey" till you have a dizzy feelin,'

And you think you're goin' round an' round an' walkin' on the ceilin'?

Well, you better stop yer screechin' an' a-makin' such a din,

Er I'll have to call the old cat o' nine tails in—

Have to call him in; yes, have to call him in; in.

tails

cat o' nine

old

I'll have to call the old cat o' nine tails in.

old

cat o' nine

tails

in.

Do you allers mind yer manners when company is come?

· Er do you git upstairs an' yell, an' stomp around an' drum?

Do you show off at the table, too, an' try to act up smart,

An' p'int yer fingers at the things an' say: "Gimme a tart?"

If some one does n't dress you down I think it is a sin;

So I'll have to call the old cat o' nine tails in—

Have to call him in; yes, have to call him in; in.

tails

cat o' nine

old

I 'll have to call the old cat o' nine tails in.

old

cat o' nine

tails

in.

OLD ST. JOE

F all the towns that jest suits me From Stevensville to Manistee, There 's one old place I can't fergit; It ain't a great ways off, and yit From here it's sixty miles er so In a bee line—that 's Old St. Joe.

I don't p'tend to write, an' ain't
One of them air chaps 'at paint;
'F I was I'd tell o' scenes 'at lie
Stretched out afore a feller's eye;
Er when the sun was hangin' low
I 'd paint it right from Old St. Joe.

I 've seen folks gether there in crowds Jest fer to watch the golden clouds Changin' shapes, and sort o' windin' Into figgers, never mindin' That old lake spread out below, Reflectin' 'em at Old St. Joe. Underneath them cedar trees
Is where I used to take my ease.
Birds a-singin' all along
The hedge, an' each one had a song
An' sung its best to let you know
They jest got back to Old St. Joe.

They ain't no purtier sight to me— That is, 'cordin' to my idee— Than jest to watch the gulls 'at fly Round that old pier; an' hear 'em cry An' circle round. It 'pears they know Fishin' 's good at Old St. Joe.

Course the people over there
They don't notice 'em er care—
What they 're worrin' 'bout is frost,
An' whether strawberries is lost;
Yit they 'pear to take things slow,
Jest the same as Old St. Joe.

'Ceptin' rheumatiz, their health Is middlin' good, an' as fer wealth They got that, an' lots o' land;



They ain't no purtier sight to me— Than jest to watch the gulls 'at fly

•

Course the sile is mixed 'ith sand; But that 's what makes the berries grow Over there at Old St. Joe.

Take it gener'ly, as a rule,
A feller likes where it 's cool,
Where he can sleep, an' drink in air
That comes perfumed from orchards where
The peach trees jest begin to blow;
Then where 's a place like Old St. Joe?

Such cool breeze blowin' back
Keeps the skeeters makin' tack
An' the flies they mostly stay
Up round Pipestone creek, they say.
Tell you what, one thing I know—
They ain't no flies on Old St. Joe.

HANK SPINK

HANK SPINK, he said—er Bob did, his brother—

'At he hit a man once for somepin' er other, An' after he hit him—I got this from Bob— He simply went right out an' give up his job:

Not Hank er Bob,

But the feller 'at got hit

Give up his job.

See?

He said 'at the wind, er the force of his blow, Er somepin' like that, somehow—I don't know

Just now what it was—I got it from Bob, 'At he got a good swat; not Hank er Bob, By a long shot,

But the feller 'at got hit Got a good swat.

See?

He said he'd be blamed, 'at he didn't know
How he came to strike such an all-fired blow,
'Cept he guarded his right an' threw the hull
heft
Of his weight an' his science, an' hit with his
left;

That lost him his job, not Hank er Bob But the feller 'at got hit,

Lost him his job.

See?

THE WOODTICKS

THERE 's things out in the forest
'At 's worser 'n an owl,

'At gets on naughty boys an' girls
'At allers wears a scowl.

There 's things out in the forest
'At 's worser 'n a lion,

'At gets on wicked boys an' girls
'At 's quarrelin' an' a-cryin'.

There 's things out in the forest, mind,
An' if you don't take care,

The woodticks—the woodticks—
Will be crawlin' thro' yer hair.

An' they say as boys is naughty,
An' their hearts is full o' sin,
They'll crawl out in the night time
An' get underneath yer skin,
An' the doctor'll have to take a knife
An' cut 'em off jest so,
An' if a bit of 'em is left
Another one'll grow.

An' mebbe you won't feel 'em, too, Er ever know they 're there, But by an' by they 'll multiply An' crawl up in yer hair.

The devil's darnin' needle, too,

'Ll come an' sew yer ear.

An' make a nest inside like that,

An' then you'll never hear;

An' the jigger bugs gets on you,

An' the thousand-legged worm
'Ll make you writhe, an' twist, an' groan,

An' cry, an' yell, an' squirm;

But the worst things 'at'll get you

If you lie, er steal, er swear,

Is the woodticks—the woodticks—

A-crawlin' thro' yer hair.

THE TRAMP

He had n't had a smell of food,

Not even had a scent.

He never even muttered once

Till he began to talk,

And when he left the kitchen door

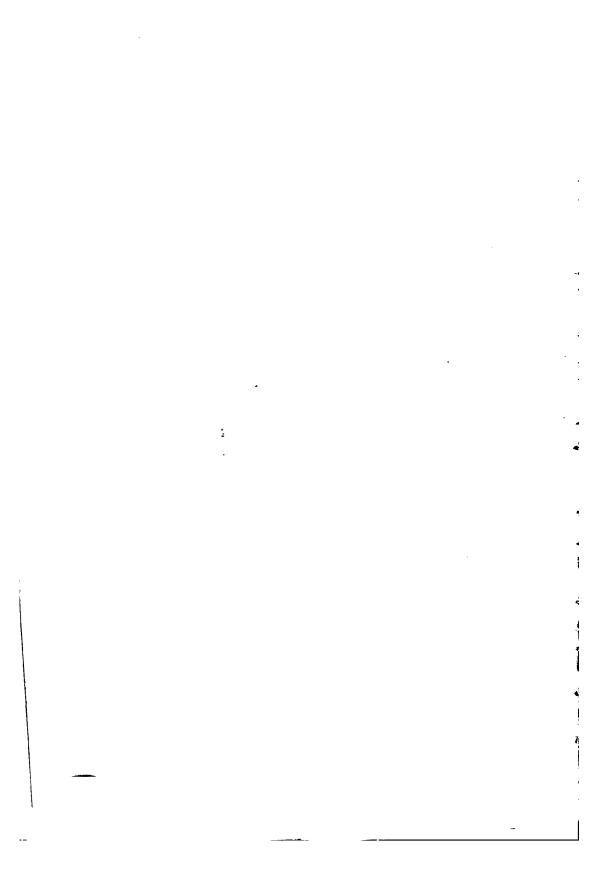
He took the garden walk.

He said: "There's no one with me,
Because I am alone;
I might have scintillated once;
My clothes have always shone.
I got here 'fore the other ones
Because I started first:
The reason I look shabby is
Because I 'm dressed the worst."

Then I asked him where he came from—
This was just before we parted,
And he muttered indistinctly,
"Oh, I come from where I started!"



And when he left the kitchen door He took the garden walk.



COMING CHRISTMAS MORN

I'M goin' to start next Saturday;
It won't take more 'n a day
To visit the United States
In my new toboggan sleigh.
I've sent Jack Frost ahead o' me
To sort o' find a road,
So my deers'll find it easy
'Cause I've got an awful load.

But they 've had lots o' exercise
An' know the way by sight;
I've speeded them to Baffin's Bay
An' back here 'fore 't was night.
An' once I drove to Puget's Sound
An' once to Behring Sea;
I had to make a trip up there
To get a Christmas tree.

I wish 't you all could see my house,
Built out o' cakes o' ice;
I guess you think it cold inside,
But no, it 's awful nice.

All carpeted with sealskin rugs,
An' ermine, mink an' sable;
I'm going to keep it furnished so
As long as I am able.

An' no gomphobers in the north
Can steal round unawares,
Because my castle's guarded by
Two great big polar bears.
So if a burglar man should come
An' try to break into it
They 'ud squeeze his life out in a jif,
I've taught 'em how to do it.

Just right around behind my house
Is where I keep the toys,
'At I am comin' south'ard with,
Fer all good girls an' boys.
My big cold storage warehouse stands
Right by a frozen tarn,
An' right along aside o' it
I have my reindeer's barn.

So never mind, they're both piled full Of everything on earth,

With Christmas gifts till you can't rest.

I don't know what they 're worth.

An' four big sea dogs set outside

Two walruses, a seal

That knows so much if you'd come nigh

The purtiest sight you ever saw,
'S when things is lit up nights—
You know we don't have gas up here,
But use the Northern Lights.

He'd be the first to squeal.

An' forth from every icicleA dazzle spreads away'At turns the hull big frozen zoneInto one mighty day.

From where I live, I'd have you know,
It's truth upon my soul,
I don't have very far to go
To see the big North Pole,
Where Uncle Sam has pinned his flag,
There's where the cold wind pipes,
An' flaunts the emblem of the brave,
The proud old stars an' stripes.

I'm coming, children, coming, yes,
You ought to see my sleigh,
An' hear the tinkle, tinkle, as
I speed along the way,
Through forests bare, o'er snowy plains.
As sure as you are born,
Old Santa Claus is coming, an'
Will be here Christmas morn.

HOW OFTEN

THEY stood on the bridge at midnight, In a park not far from town; They stood on the bridge at midnight Because they didn't sit down.

The moon rose o'er the city

Behind the dark church spire;

The moon rose o'er the city

And kept on rising higher.

How often, oh! how often
They whispered words so soft;
How often, oh! how often,
How often, oh! how oft.

DIDN'T WE, JIM?

YES, sir; we lived home till our mother died, An' I 'd go a-walkin' with Jim, cause he cried,

Till night time 'ud come, an' we 'd go up ter bed

An' bofe say the prayers 'at she taught us ter said—

Didn't we, Jim?

An' pa 'ud stay late, an' we uster call, 'Cause we thought we heard him downstairs in the hall:

An' when he come home once he fell on the floor,

An' we run'd an' hid behind ma's bedroom door-

Didn't we, Jim?

She told us, our ma did, when she 's sick in bed, An' out of the Bible some verses read,

Ter never touch wine, and some more I can't think;



She told us, our ma did, when she 's sick in bed, An' out of the Bible some verses read,

But the last words she said was never ter drink—

Didn't she, Jim?

But our other ma, what our pa brought home there,

She whipped little Jim 'cause he stood on a chair

An' kissed our ma's picture that hung on the wall,

An' struck me fer not doin' nothin' at all— Didn't she, Jim?

She said 'at we never had no bringin' up, An' stayed round the house an' eat everything up,

An' said 'at we could n't have no more ter eat, An' all 'at we 's fit fer was out in the street— Didn't she, Jim?

We said 'at we hated her, didn't we, Jim?
But our pa—well, we didn't say nothin' ter him,

But just took ma's picture an' bofe run'd away;

An' that 's what Jim 's cryin' 'bout out here to-day—

Didn't we, ain't it, Jim?

Mister, don't feel bad—'cause Jim's cryin'— too;

Fer we're goin' ter hunt an' git somethin' ter do;

'Cause our ma 'at died said ter work an' ter pray,

An' we 'd all be together in glory some day— Didn't she, Jim?

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

MAVOURNEEN, swate Isle,
I am lonely widout thee,
I sigh for your hills an' your calm sky so
blue;
Shure I niver had cause

One shmall moment to doubt thee,
An' whin I'm not thinkin' I'm dhreamin' of
you.

CHORUS

So lads, whin I call ye's,
Come sing your "Come all Ye's,"
Ah! here's to ould Ireland, byes, ivery toime:
Och, coleens, be aisy,
Your dhrivin' me crazy,
What day of our counthry is one half so
foine?

St. Patrick's the day, shure, It was in the mornin,'

An' oh! how it graved me, Mavourneen, to part;

But I left ye's, as I Left me mother, a-mournin'

An' kissin' the shamrock she placed near me heart.

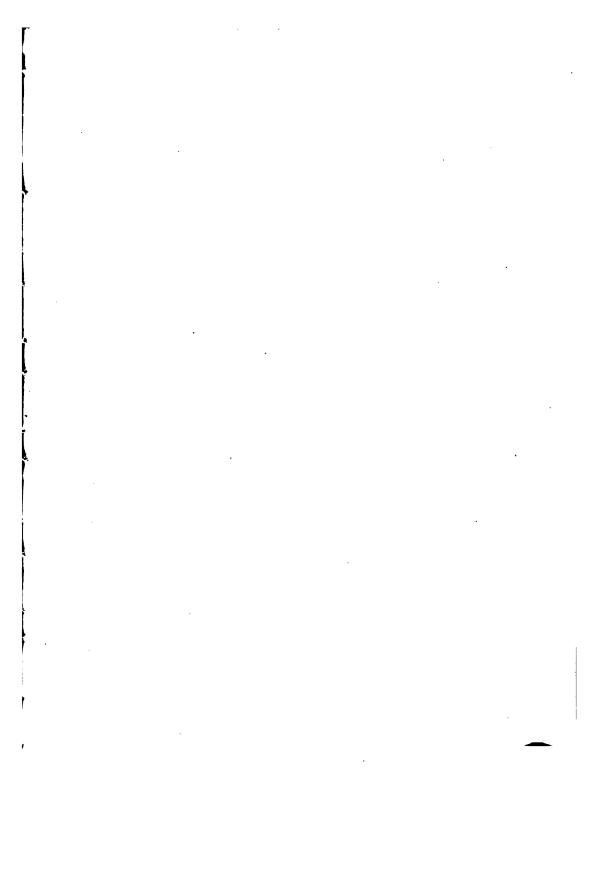
I'm sorry I left ye's
To cross the deep wather,
For the game that I've played wid misfortune's a draw;
But don't ye be ailin,'
I'll soon be a-sailin'
Away to the Isle of swate "Erin go Bragh."

Then lend me the harp
An' I'll wake "Tipperary,"
Sing "By Killarney" wid "Noreen Maureen;"
The shamrock I'm pressin,'
An' while I'm confessin'
I'm praisin' St. Patrick an' "wearin' the green."

THE COW SLIPS AWAY

THE tall pines pine,
The pawpaws pause,
And the bumblebee bumbles all day;
The eavesdropper drops,
And the grasshopper hops,
While gently the cow slips away.

The poems in this volume have been selected from King's complete work, "Ben King's Verse," published by Forbes and Company, Chicago.



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